



September 30, 2011

Dear CSSR/SCÉR Members,

Welcome to the fall of 2011. We hope your term has begun well, and the academic year ahead fulfills your aspirations. We have, as announced on our membership list and at Congress this year, launched our new website. Our Technology Liaison, Yasaman Munro and her partner Sean Munro, developed the site and maintain it for the CSSR. We are very excited about our new website, and hope that you find the time to visit, and while there complete your membership information, and view the videos of the reception and a number of panels from Congress 2011, and check the forums and discussions. We'd like to draw your attention to the website discussion of the CSSR book prize as we wish to circulate its terms of reference to the membership and then initiate the prize at the AGM 2012, pending final approval.

As you might have noted, we are no longer sending out the *Bulletin* to our members, and instead are sending a brief newsletter, such as you are reading now, and inviting our members to secure updates and find information on the CSSR website. The decision to cease production of the *Bulletin* was made by the membership at the 2011 AGM. Members in attendance felt that the *Bulletin*, a labour intensive product, simply repeated some of the material on the website and was therefore redundant, and lacked other material from the website and therefore was only a partial reporting. All the information found in the *Bulletin*, and more, can now be found at our website <http://www.ccsr.ca/cssr/>. With the addition of a Technology Liaison to the executive, we now have the ability to update the website directly. You will have continual access to current news and information at the website instead of a static *Bulletin* updated only twice each year.

Our membership secretary, Michael Wilkinson, has reported that the membership of the CSSR has dropped off: 115 as of September 2011 (New Brunswick); 125 in 2010 (Montreal) and 215 in 2009 (Ottawa). The shifts in numbers certainly represent, in part, the movement of the Congress across Canada, but attendance at the Congress should not be the only reason one maintains their membership in good standing. Our members receive the journal *Studies in Religion / Sciences Religieuses* (Sage does

not send the journal to those whose membership has elapsed), access to membership only sections of our website (currently in development), representation of Religious Studies members to the CCSR, CFHSS, and SSHRC, and support for members to further their academic work. In order for a society to remain healthy, members need to support it by maintaining their membership in good standing, participating in conferences and on the website, and serving on the executive and/or committees developed.

Speaking of serving your association, two executive positions (president and one member at large position) will need to be filled at the 2012 AGM. If you have served on the executive before, then you might consider putting your name forward for president (in case this role sounds daunting, the current president steps into the Vice President position and assists the new president).

### *Congress 2011*

The annual Congress meeting in New Brunswick this year was a very successful event and its success was due, in large measure, to the diligent and creative work of our Program Coordinators, Allison Marshall and Ruby Ramji, and our Local Arrangements Office, Thom Parkhill. I want to thank them for organizing a truly interesting conference and for their dedication to the CCSR. I also want to thank presenting members for their contribution to a very interesting and lively conference. Do check out the videos on the website and feel free to share your own.

This year we introduced the President's reception and we were very pleased with the membership turnout. The reception offered a complimentary alcoholic beverage, a light supper snack, and some comments from the executive; all of which were followed up by the film, *Raavan* (2010). We will be holding a President's Reception and film (to be determined) at the 2012 Congress and we hope to see you there.

### *Congress 2012*

Next year's conference will take place at Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Waterloo in Waterloo, Ontario May 26 until May 29 2012. We invite members to consider submitting abstracts for panels and papers for the program. A highlight for the 2012 program is the event "Gandhi in a Canadian Context" organized by Alexander Damm.

### *CSSR/SCÉR Website and Bulletin*

As many of you are aware, the *Bulletin* used to be published twice a year and as a newsletter, kept members informed of the activities of the society including the annual meeting. The *Bulletin* also offered updates on the activities of its

members, job postings, research projects, and other information of interest to the Society.

Since the launch of our new website, which has been designed to be user-friendly and helpful, we have decided to post all this information throughout the site for members to browse at their convenience. Our older *Bulletin* newsletters can now be accessed under our Archives menu.

The website Newsfeed offers our latest updates on Calls for Papers, job postings, funding and prize opportunities, and general announcements. Throughout the rest of the site you will find items such as your current list of CSSR/SCÉR Executive Members, the President's Report, and information about your Annual General Meeting. Take advantage of our new searchable Member Profile database, as well as our discussion forum, where you can connect with others in this international community of students and scholars of religion. Our Media section offers photos, audioclips, and videos of events and conference sessions. Please do not be shy to send in your media for posting to the site. Renewing your membership is easy with our Paypal and mail options.

Your participation makes all the difference to this Society, and so we warmly invite you to take part in our fall 2011 to-do list:

- Browse the new website features, so that you can find them easily when you, your colleagues and students need them. You may also subscribe to the RSS version of our website Newsfeed for updates.
- Please take some time to fill in your website member profile. Detailed member profiles make it easier for us to meet and continue connecting with one another.
- Browse the website member profiles. Strike up a conversation or two with members you may or may not know.
- Discuss your Society with colleagues and students, and encourage them to become members too.

We are always working together with you to make this Society thrive now and into the future. Connect with us.

Cordially, Darlene Juschka, President, Yasaman Munro, Technology Liaison, and the CSSR Executive